1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala
Bedouins MJ4

Sheykh Tai' threw several handfuls of sand over the spilled blood[1]—for so desert custom demands. Blood is *haram*, that is, "forbidden." Opening the jaws of the dead animal and pointing to the wicked fangs, he said: "Thou and I are kinsmen for the traces which thou leavest behind are the same as mine." (We are both robbers, he meant—like all despised Bedouins.)

Later in the day, as we galloped on, we sighted in the distance what at first we took for some of our mounted hunters driving wolves towards us. But they did not move.

I thought I could recognize riderless horses, watching us with raised heads. But Sheyk Tai' laughed and cried out to me that they were neither horses nor horsemen, but wild asses. I would not believe him at first, for the animals seemed too high in the leg.

Sheykh Tai' pointed out to me that the troop had a leader and this became apparent when the shy creatures ran off. We did not follow, and they disappeared into the clear distance of the Sinjar Mountains.

Fleeting shadows cast from above now hurried across the plain before our horses. I knew them of old from raids in the inner part of Arabia. They were the "Sharers of the Prey."

Shading my eyes with my hand, I looked up to the sky, where on motionless pinions the great vultures were sailing. They knew well the purpose of our ride; and they were sure of their feast of dead wolves. A wide-spread cloud of dust rose on the horizon and moved towards us. These were the beaters, whose semicircle stead-

1 - [of a wolf killed in a hunt--Analyst]

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI 1
Bedouins MJ4
Saudi Arabia MJ1

'Anizah Taboo

K 136 SA 136

It is found over the whole of North-Eastern Arabia, and prefers hard gravelly ground to loose sand. It lives in a hole, anything up to 4 feet in depth, which it excavates in spiral fashion. It is a common sight to see this animal basking in the summer sun close to its hole, and silently diving into its recess on the approach of danger. It disappears entirely during the winter months and reappears during the late spring and summer months, so it would seem to hibernate. It grows to a length of approximately 3 feet, and is very fierce.

Its greatest enemy is the wurral, or snake-headed monitor. The dhub has an ordinary-shaped tongue, and is armed with a row of vicious-looking sharp teeth, but its principal weapon of defence is its tail.

It has long, sharp claws and a white stomach, and hisses loudly when angry. When it first appears in spring, after hibernation, it is brilliant yellow-ochre in colour, and as summer arrives it develops a grey-green tint with pale yellow bands across its back. Rings of the same pale yellow go round its tail between rows of spikes.

Its name is not to be confused with *ddb*, the Badawin name for snake, or with *dhabi*, a gazelle.

The dhub lays between fifty and sixty eggs at a time in the sand, and covers them up. When the young are about to hatch, the mother is said to come back again and eat them all up except three, which she places on her back—one on her head, one on the middle of her back and one on her tail. This curious story is vouched for by the Badawin, but I have so far failed to find a dhub lizard with young, and cannot verify the statement.

B 262 619 784

The dhub will eat a certain amount of grass, but its natural food is obviously grasshoppers and other insects. It certainly devours voraciously any locusts that it comes across. All Badawin consider it fit for food.

Throughout Arabia there is a saying that the dhub is held in special sanctity by the 'Anizah tribe. Certain it is that no member of that tribe will kill, much less eat, this lizard.

Hence when wanting to annoy or anger an 'Anizah tribesman, rival Badawin will say that the dhub is his ancestor (*Al dhub jidd al 'Anaq*). This jibe refers to the story that an 'Anizah ancestor was

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI1
Bedouins MI4
Saudi Arabia MJ1

B 862 619 784

turned into a dhub by the Prophet. The true reason for the sanctity of the dhub is obscure.

AL KHASWI

Al Khaswi is a small lizard delicately built; when full grown does not exceed 7 inches in length. It is commonly met everywhere in the desert of North-East Arabia, and is very fast. It may be seen rushing about at lightning speed from one *'arfaj* bush to another, switching its long thin tail from side to side. It has a fine skin, spotted on the back, and is greyish white in colour.

K 136 SA 136

Another variety of this lizard has lines along its back, and is pale salmon pink in colour under the tail. Among the Shammar Badawin the same lizard is known under the name of *Al Sulaimaniyah*.

[B 104]

ROLLER BEETLE

The desert is full of roller beetles, especially where Badawin camps exist. This beetle is locally known as *Abu Jalla* (Father of camel manure) or Abu Ja'al.*

It usually appears in spring, and is to be seen everywhere, rolling fresh bits of manure (camel, horse, donkey or even goat) into a perfect ball, and carting it off backwards at an amazing and feverish pace. When the beetle comes to a nice soft spot, it starts digging a sloping hole in mad fashion, sufficiently large to take its manure ball. When the hole is ready it rolls the ball down the slope of the hole, where it comes to rest 8 to 10 inches from the entrance. The digging is done with the beetle's strong fore-feet, and to get earth out it turns round and shovels out earth with head and snout. It is extremely fussy, and works as if life depended on getting the hole dug in a minimum of time. When rolling the ball along, the beetle's hind quarters and legs are cocked up against the ball and guide the latter in the proper direction, the beetle's strong head and claws which are on the ground do the pushing. The roller beetle always moves backwards at an amazing pace if ground is smooth.

It usually has several small fly-parasites on its back, which appear to have their abode in the join between head and body.

* Roller beetle appeared in 1937 on February 19th and just after good rain. Clearly they come out of the ground where they hibernate for six months.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

752 (3) A sheep must be slain at once and the whole of the wounded limb must be wrapped in the skin of the sheep whilst still warm. Better still, if the person can wrap his whole body in the skin. This is to make him or her perspire thoroughly. If the weather is cold and sweat comes slowly, the patient is made to lie down and two fires are lit close on either side.

(4) The patient is given tea from the *ramrám* plant, if available, and the actual spot where the bite shows is covered with *ramrám* paste.

Care must be taken to prevent the bitten person from sleeping, and for twenty-four hours he must be kept awake at all costs. After twenty-four hours the skin is removed, but the tourniquets are kept on night and day, in spite of the agony and swelling of the limbs, for twenty days.

A woman of the Rashaida tribe, from Qatar, who was bitten by a cobra on the ankle, told me that she underwent the above treatment, and that eventually her foot swelled to such an extent that it burst (her expression) at the instep, and black pussy liquid in very large quantities flowed away. That was considered to be the snake poison leaving her, but it was more probably gangrenous pus which had accumulated as a result of stopping the blood circulation.

Among the Diyahin tribe, a sept of the Mutair (Braih), I knew another woman, Nura Um Mubarak (a relation of Hillal al Mutairi), who had survived three bites from the horned viper. She underwent the same treatment each time.

CURING SORE EYES

757 Rifa'a, the wife of Shaikh Thuwairan abu Sifra of the Rukhman section of the Mutair, told me the following on 24th April, 1937, in course of general conversation. For ordinary sore eyes caused by flies and dirt generally the best cure was:

(1) In case of a child, for the mother or another woman to put a few drops of her milk daily in the child's eyes. This soothed and had a definitely curative effect.

757 784 (2) In case of a man, the same thing applied, but it must never be the milk of his own wife. That was sinful and results would be worse than the cure. Another woman's milk was necessary.

R Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MJ 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

● 784 She added also that for a woman to taste her own milk was sinful and would cause her husband to stop caring for her, similarly no woman should allow her husband ever to taste her milk, however small the quantity. This was "unlawful" according to the Shari'ah law, or so said the *Mushaiyikh* or Holy Priests of Najd.